

Appl. No. 09/918,844  
Amdt. Dated May 24, 2004  
Reply to Office action of April 23, 2004

### Remarks

Claims 20-26 remain pending in this application. The examiner's final action rejects claim 20 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,902,423 issued to Bacino. Claims 21-26 stand rejected as being unpatentably obvious considering Bacino in view of alleged admitted prior art in the Applicant's own specification.

We disagree with the examiner's findings. Claim 20, however, has been amended to more clearly distinguish this claim over Bacino.

Bacino does not disclose a PTFE material as that which is now claimed. For example, both independent claims 20 and 26 include limitations of a PTFE material including short fibrils interconnecting nodes to form expanded aggregations. This may be seen in the scanning electron microscope photograph's submitted as figures along with the application. Short fibrils like this are not shown in Bacino, or any of the other references cited.

Bacino discloses long fibrils connecting rows of transverse fibrillated nodes. See Col. 2, lines 38-46. At Page 3, item 4, line 7 of the office action the examiner asserts that "[t]he bundles of fibers 4 correspond to the Applicant's short fibers." This statement is incorrect. The relatively shorter fiber bundles of Bacino occur in the conventional sorts of PTFE fibrils found between unexpanded PTFE nodes. In Bacino the short bundles do extend transversely between aggregations, but there is no interconnecting by short fibrils between the nodes in each aggregation. Bacino transverse bundles do nothing to reduce the densities of the aggregations as do the short fibrils of the material of the present invention. The Bacino nodes are, instead, tightly packed.

The aggregations of the material of the present invention, however, are expanded. This expansion forms the short fibrils interconnecting each node in the aggregation. These

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interconnected nodes are no longer tightly packed. They are, rather, spaced by the short fibrils. This spacing decreases the density of each aggregation.

With respect to the examiner's alleged admissions, we again assert that examiner's references to the specification wherein the properties of the prior art materials are discussed do not teach anything remotely similar to what is claimed. *In re Aller*, the case cited by the examiner, would not apply here because the examiner has not shown all the elements claimed. Because the examiner has failed to show the short fibrils claimed, any issues regarding the alleged admissions are moot, thus, will not be discussed in detail here.

Therefore, because all of the claimed limitations are not shown in the prior art, it is respectfully requested that all outstanding rejections be withdrawn, and claims 20-26 pass on to issue. If, however, the Examiner believes that any outstanding issues remain, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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